

Message Text

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42

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 SY-05 USIE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-10 AID-05 ACDA-05 EB-07

OPR-02 OC-05 CCO-00 /088 W
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O 131210Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9753

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 4588

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CB

SUBJECT: MARCH 13, THE 72ND DAY OF THE OFFENSIVE

REF: PHNOM PENH 4507

1. SUMMARY. THE MAIN ATTACKING ELEMENT TRYING TO RETAKE
TUOL LEAP NORTHWEST OF POCHENTONG AIRPORT MOVED OUT, BUT
DID NOT GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO THE BATTLE AREA TO ENGAGE THE
ENEMY TODAY. A ROCKET SET FIRE TO A TEMPORARY AMMO
STORAGE AREA NEAR THE CIVILIAN TERMINAL AND MOST OF 90
TONS OF AMMUNITION EXPLODED. THE HAZARD CAUSED THE GKR
TO CLOSE THE AIRPORT, BUT 22 AIRLIFT FLIGHTS (HALF THE
DAILY AVERAGE) HAD ALREADY BROUGHT IN RICE, AMMO AND POL.
THE AIRLIFT WILL RESUME MARCH 14. THE KC CONTINUED TO HIT
NEAK LUONG WITH HEAVY ATTACKS BY FIRE AND LAUNCHED GROUND PROBES ON
THE EAST AND WEST SIDES OF THE TOWN'S PERIMETER. FORTY-FIVE
ROCKETS AND TWO 105MM HOWITZER ROUNDS IMPACTED AT POCHENTONG
AIRPORT AND VICINITY. ONE ROCKET EXPLODED WITH NO
EFFECT ON THE NORTHERN EDGE OF PHNOM PENH.

END SUMMARY.

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2. A MAJOR OPERATION TO RETAKE TUOL LEAP BEGAN TODAY WITH 2-1/2 KM OF FORWARD MOVEMENT BY THE MAIN ATTACKING ELEMENT, BUT FANK REPORTS NO SIGNIFICANT CONTACT AS YET. FIVE KOMPONG SPEU-BASED BATTALIONS SUPPORTED BY AN ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIER (APC) SQUADRON AND FOUR BATTALIONS FROM A 2ND DIVISION BRIGADE, ALSO WITH AN APC SQUADRON, FORM THE MAIN ATTACKING ELEMENT WHICH WILL MOVE NORTH AND THEN ATTACK THE KC AT TUOL LEAP FROM THE WEST. TWO BATTALIONS FROM THE 1ST DIVISION, ALSO APC-SUPPORTED, ARE ATTACKING TUOL LEAP FROM THE SOUTHEAST WITH THE AIM OF FIXING THE KC IN PLACE. THREE 23RD BRIGADE BATTALIONS ARE HOLDING THEIR PRESENT LINE WHICH IS BETWEEN THE TWO ATTACKING ELEMENTS AND IN CONTACT WITH THE KC.

3. LATE THIS MORNING ONE OF TWO KC ROCKETS SET FIRE TO AN AREA HOLDING OVER 90 TONS OF AMMUNITION AWAITING RIGGING FOR AIRDROP. THE AMMO SMOLDERED FOR SEVERAL HOURS BEFORE A LARGE FRACTION OF IT EXPLODED. TWO SOLDIERS WERE SLIGHTLY INJURED AND A NUMBER OF CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT REPORTEDLY DAMAGED. THE SMALL AMMO DUMP WAS ABOUT 500 YARDS FROM THE CIVILIAN TERMINAL. THE GKR CLOSED THE AIRFIELD IN THE LATE MORNING ENDING THE AIRLIFT FOR THE DAY. IN EARLY MORNING OPERATIONS, NINE DC-8'S AND 13 C-130'S LANDED WITH RICE, AMMO AND POL. THE KHMER AIR FORCE CONTINUED TO USE THE FIELD THROUGHOUT THE DAY. THE AIRLIFT IS SCHEDULED TO RESUME MARCH 14. OUR USAID FLIGHT OPERATED NORMALLY, ALTHOUGH WITH A SLIGHT DELAY.

4. IN THE 7TH DIVISION AREA NORTHWEST OF PHNOM PENH, THE KC ARE EXPLOITING A 2 KM GAP ON ROUTE 51 JUST WEST OF PREK PHNOUT TO MENACE THE NORTHERN DIKE. THE SEVENTH CLAIMED 26 KC KILLED IN ACTIONS MARCH 12. LAST NIGHT, HOWEVER, THE KC ATTACKED A KEY ARTILLERY POSITION JUST SOUTH OF THE NORTHERN DIKE. FANK HAS TWO BATTALION EQUIVALENTS OF UNTESTED REPUBLICAN POLICE AND ONE PARATROOP BATTALION TO CONTEST INFILTRATORS WHO REACH THE NORTHERN DIKE.

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5. AT NEAK LUONG ON THE MEKONG, THE KC CONTINUED TO HIT THE TOWN WITH 105MM HOWITZER, 75MM RECOILLESS RIFLE AND 102MM MORTAR FIRE WHICH KILLED 15 AND INJURED 17. THE KC ATTACKED A POST ON THE EASTERN PERIMETER AND ATTACKED THE REINFORCED BATTALION AT THE FERRY SLIP ON THE WEST BANK OF THE MEKONG OPPOSITE THE TOWN.

6. FORTY-FIVE ROCKETS AND TWO 105'S HIT AT POCHENTONG
IN THE PAST TWENTY-FOUR HOURS. ONE ROUND HIT ON THE
NORTHERN EDGE OF PHNOM PENH WITH NO CASUALTIES OR DAMAGE.
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